

DEAR MR. SECRETARY:

KEEP LAKESIDE VA HOSPITAL OPERATIONAL

CHICAGO'S ARMED SERVICES VETERANS MUST AVOID LOSING AFFILIATION WITH THE NORTHWESTERN'S PHYSICIANS AND CUTTING EDGE MEDICAL SCHOOL AND TRAINING CENTER.

THE LOSS OF INPATIENT BEDS AND HOSPITAL CARE IS AND WAS A DEVASTATING TURN OF EVENTS FOR ARMED SERVICES VETERANS LIVING IN THE CITY AND CLOSE-IN NORTH AND NORTHWESTERN SUBURBS.

THE PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS ASSIGNED TO SERVICE THE VETERAN PATIENT POPULATION AT LAKESIDE VA ARE AMONGST THE BEST TRAINED IN THE COUNTRY. IN ADDITION, THEY HAVE LIFE-SAVING EMERGENCY BACK-UP FACILITIES AT ONE OF THE NATION'S FOREMOST LEADING EDGE TEACHING HOSPITALS, THAT OF THE NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY'S MEDICAL CENTER.

IT IS REASONABLE TO EXPECT NOTHING LESS THAN CONVENIENTLY ACCESSABLE FACILITIES AND THE BEST MEDICAL STAFF AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN OF THEMSELVES IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY.

A SERVICEMAN IS TRAINED TO GIVE OF HIMSELF WITHOUT RESERVATION, EVEN AT THE RISK OF DIRE LOSS OF LIFE AND LIMB, WITH THE UNSPOKEN UNDERSTANDING THAT APPROPRIATE HELP AND AID WILL BE AT THE READY WHEN AND IF NECESSARY. THE SLOW ERROSION OF SERVICES TO THOSE WHO HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO THAT PROMISE IS A NATIONAL DISGRACE AND LOCAL TRAVESTY.

I AM CERTAIN THAT THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VETS LIKE ME WHO NEVER FLINCHED AT THE IDEA OF ENLISTING. YOU SEE, IT WAS AN OBLIGATION TO SERVE MY COUNTRY. AND IN APPRECIATION OF BEING A FIRST GENERATION AMERICAN, NOTWITHSTANDING SEVERAL AVAILABLE DEFERMENTS, MY IMIGRANT PARENTS DIDN'T FLINCH EITHER IN GIVING THEIR CONSENT TO THEIR UNDER-AGED ONLY SON.

LET'S SEE! DID THEY NEED TO ASK THAT IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN, THAT MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WOULD BE ON HAND TO PERHAPS SAVE A LIFE? NO! BECAUSE IT WAS A GIVEN...THAT IN SERVING AMERICA THAT WE AMERICANS SHOULD DO ALL WITHIN OUR POWER TO TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN.

DID THE GUY IN THE WHEELCHAIR ASK, THAT IF HE TOOK THIS HIT, WAS HE GOING TO BE INCONVENIENCED HIS ENTIRE LIFE BY NOT HAVING FACILITIES CLOSE TO HOME FOR HE AND HIS FAMILY TO GO FOR TREATMENT? NO! BECAUSE IT WAS UNIMAGINABLE, THAT WHO AND FOR WHAT HE WAS FIGHTING FOR, WOULD EVER LET HIM DOWN.

I REMEMEBER A FELLOW VETERAN WHO WAS QUADRUPLEGIC AND AN INPATIENT AT LAKESIDE VA HOSPITAL. I MET HIM SEVERAL YEARS AGO, AND HE HAD THIS GREAT ATTITUDE AND I GUESS YOU'D SAY A LUST FOR LIFE, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING WHAT HE'D BEEN DEALT. HE SERVED IN VIET NAM, AND LEFT BEHIND WHAT MOST WOULD CONSIDER EVERYTHING NEEDED TO CARRY ON. YET, WHEN HE WAS CARRYING OUT ORDERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD, DID HE NEED TO ASK IF IT WOULD BE CONVENIENT TO HAVE HIS SUPPORT GROUP OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS NEAR BY? NO! BECAUSE CENTRALLY LOCATED LAKESIDE WAS ACCESSIBLE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ENABLING FREQUENT VISITS OF LIFE GIVING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT A VALUE ON THE PHYSICAL PLANT, THE SOLE PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS TO MEND THOSE WHO WILLINGLY VOLUNTEERED AND FULFILLED THEIR OBLIGATIONS IN SERVICE TO THEIR COUNTRY. TO LOOK UPON THE SITE OF THE LAKESIDE VA HOSPITAL, AS JUST ANOTHER TRACT OF LAND, WHICH COULD COMMAND SOME FLEETING VALUE, IS TO IGNORE IT'S LOFTY AND HIGHER PURPOSE.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT. THE LAKESIDE VA HOSPITAL ISN'T A SHRINE OR A LANDMARK...UNLESS YOU CONSIDER WHAT IT MEANT TO THE STAFF AND PATIENTS WHO'S LIVES WERE ALTERED THROUGH EFFECTIVE MEDICAL TREATMENT THERE. ....OR THOSE WHOSE LIVES MAY BE ALTERED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER BY REASON OF ITS SURVIVAL OR LOSS.

I MEAN, ITS NOT AS THOUGH CHICAGO'S WATER TOWER ISN'T ON A VALUABLE SITE. CERTAINLY SOMEONE COULD FIND A HIGHER AND BETTER USE FOR IT...ECONOMICALLY, THAT IS! SO, EVERYTHING NEEDN'T BE MEASURED SOLELY IN TERMS OF DOLLARS AND CENTS.

AFTER ALL, WHAT IS THE DOLLAR VALUE OF THE LAND UNDERLYING THE FORMER WORLD TRADE CENTER? CAN A DOLLAR VALUE BE AT ALL RELEVANT IN DETERMING WHETHER A MEMORIAL SHOULD BE ITS REPLACEMENT?

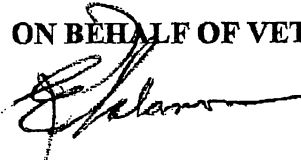
**MORE IMPORTANTLY, THERE ARE OFTEN SITUATIONS IN WHICH A DOLLAR VALUE IS NOT AT ALL RELEVANT. THE CAUSE AT HAND MAY BE JUST ONE OF THOSE INVALUABLE AND URGENT SITUATIONS.**

**CENTRALLY LOCATED IN HEART OF CHICAGO, QUICKLY ACCESSABLE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND EMERGENCY VEHICLE FROM EVERY PART OF THE CITY HAS MADE THE MEDICAL COMPLEX OF NORTHWESTERN MEMORIAL/LAKESIDE VA AND OTHER MEDICAL FACILITIES ONE OF THE ONLY AREAS IN THE COUNTRY WITH SUCH A CONCENTRATION FOR URGENT AND EFFECTIVE MEDICAL TREATMENT.**

**THE MOST EXALTED PURPOSE OF THE LAKESIDE VA HOSPITAL IS TO KEEP THE PROMISE. TO BE THERE FOR THOSE THAT WERE THERE FOR US WHEN THE NATION CALLED. TO SERVE THEM AS THEY HAVE ALREADY SERVED US. WITH PRIDE AND COMMITMENT THAT STATES EMPHATICALLY AND SIMPLY... "WE'RE HERE FOR YOU."**

**WE OWE IT TO HEALTH CARE SEEKING VETERANS OF CHICAGO TO MAINTAIN AS OPERATIONAL THE VA'S LAKESIDE FACILITY.**

**ON BEHALF OF VETERANS SIMILARLY DISPOSED,**



**EUGENE R. SALAMON  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE 1956-61  
919 SHERIDAN ROAD  
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60202**